

You are invited to Discussion #52

ATLAS MISSILE SILO AS TECHNOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL ARTIFACT

Moderators: Kyong Park with exhibiting artists/architects and
selected Project Atlas Committee members.

Tuesday/October 2, 1990/6-8 pm
\$3 suggested donation

Storefront for Art & Architecture 97 Kenmare Street NY, NY 10012
212 | 431 5795

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PROJECT ATLAS

Project Atlas is an international competition organized by **STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE**, open to the participation of individual artists, architects and groups of interested people in any field. Twelve obsolete and abandoned Atlas missile bases remain in the region surrounding Plattsburg Air Force base, at the edge of Lake Champlain and the Adirondack Mountains, in New York State. The bases were designed to house the Atlas system, the first of a series of American InterContinental Ballistic Missile weapons, capable of delivering a nuclear warhead at a distance of approximately 6000 miles. The bases were operational for only 30 months, from 1962, when they were completed, to 1965 when there were deactivated in favor of a more advanced missile system. Each underground site consists of a steel and concrete silo 174 feet deep and 52 feet in diameter, connected through an access tunnel to a circular, two-story, subterranean control center.

In the bucolic landscape, the sites seem to have been left by an alien civilization. They are monuments to our age, projecting comparable mystery to works such as Stonehenge and the great Pyramids. In their present uselessness, they are singular remnants of human faith in the advancement of progress and technology. The same Atlas rocket put the first American in space, John Glenn; A technological paradigm of the first degree. Concurrently, with its speed and long-range capability, the Atlas ICBM became the first true instrument of global war. This required extremely complex guidance and electronic communication systems. The missile guidance systems perceive and coordinate to the Earth's magnetic field, rotation and the location of sun, moon and stars. This high speed transmission and elaboration of information involved a global network that quickly reduced our planetary conception to the true Global Village.

Project Atlas is a competition seeking to go beyond the creation of innovative designs for new and public uses of the abandoned Atlas missile bases in the North East. If today the arms race seems to have reversed its course, aiming towards disarmament, the 12 abandoned bases serve as metaphor for future issues. Are the silos monuments to a time we have left behind, or will they remain precursors to an empty world. How can communities whose main support comes from the military industrial complex survive in times of de-militarization? The intent of **Project Atlas** is to interpret the contradictions and enigmas of our age, at the beginning of a new decade and on the threshold of a new millenium: like a mirror, the project aims to reflect and reverse a reality. The project touches some of the most crucial issues in regard to our culture, industrialization and modernism, spcifically challenging the formalistic truth and universal beauty embedded in pure forms and functions.

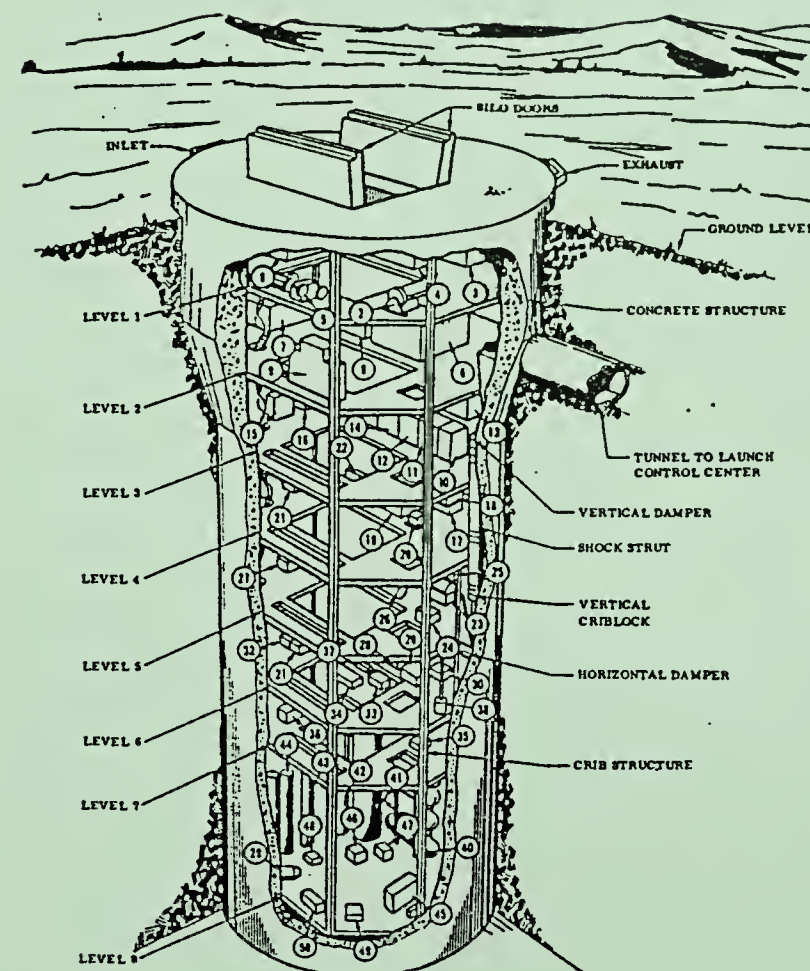


Figure 1-8 Silo Crib Arrangement

The Project Atlas Exhibit
will be at the
Adirondack Center Museum
Essex County Historical Society
Court Street
Elizabethtown, N.Y. 12932
(518) 873-6466
July 28th - Aug. 16th

Opening for the Exhibit:
Saturday, July 28, 1990
2:00 - 5:00pm